

**Career Transition  
Center**  
George P. Shultz  
National Foreign Affairs  
Training Center  
U.S. Department of State

# CTC NEWSLETTER

**MARCH  
2007**

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**HAPPY  
ST. PATRICK'S  
DAY!**

May your blessings  
outnumber  
The shamrocks that  
grow  
And may trouble  
avoid you  
Wherever you go!

## RESUME ADVICE FROM THE FIELD

*- Written by the Career Transition Center Staff,  
February 2007*



Last month we featured an article on resumes for "Career Changers" entitled "Changing Careers? Change Your Resume!" We have received some excellent comments about resumes from you, our wonderful clients, and are pleased to share them with you here.

### From The Employer's Point Of View

The first contribution is from a JSP Graduate who is now employed by a USG contractor. He recently found himself in the position of reviewing resumes for a position in his firm. Many of those resumes had been sent by former employees of the U.S. foreign affairs agencies, some of whom were JSP Graduates, too! He provided us with some observations about that experience and offered some excellent advice on writing resumes:

"I studied the 40-odd resumes very carefully to look for ideas to improve my own resume, and found that, although almost all of the applicants had been through the [Job Search Program], some of what CTC taught may not have made as firm an impression on students as it might. .... [I made] some notes from my review of these 40 resumes. Then it occurred to me that my notes might be useful to CTC -- as a sort of report from the view of a "resume reader" with a job to fill. It might help impress upon students the need to LISTEN to what they're told in the resume workshop, because CTC's advice is on-target.

"Here is what I discovered:



- Most resumes sent to us were far too long -- 6 to 8 pages! And some of the longest used the tiniest fonts to squeeze in even more data into those too many pages. The more senior the retired FSO, the more pages s/he seemed to think necessary. Some very senior officers actually sent two or three different resumes, as though the hirer would read and choose among them. Some folks included copies of their publications or ... documents promoting their own consultancies. We hadn't asked for that additional material.
- I was surprised how few of the resumes focused on the job on offer. Folks sent in "generic" resumes rather than modifying a standard resume to slant it for the particular job. Most sent cover letters but a large percent did not tailor them to the job. The tailored resume/cover letter packages got the most attention here because they showed understanding and interest.
- Also surprised me how few applicants researched the job before sending in resumes. Some sent in resumes that were immediately rejected because they showed absolutely no connection to the job. Of course, this offering was for a short-term, seemingly one-off opportunity, but it offered a successful applicant [a very generous sum] and, better, it offered a foot-in-the-door for future ... programs, even for those who didn't succeed his time. Looking at these resumes taught me to put 100% into every job

application and, at the same time, not to waste effort on things that really are too far afield for me.

- As part of that job research, only a half dozen of the 40+ applicants contacted us about the job, by phone or e-mail, or indicated in their cover letters that they had participated in similar kinds of work and so knew about it. A phone call or e-mail is a cheap and easy way to collect data, and I

was happy to respond to those who contacted me (as offered in our ad).

- Many/many of the resumes seemed written for a State, USAID or USIA audience. I had to translate them for [the employer]. Senior officers bragged as they are wont to do, and [the employer] found that a turn-off. FSOs used too much jargon. Outsiders have no idea what a "meritorious

honor award" may be or why getting one or a dozen is significant, or why so many FSOs would devote a half page describing all of their awards. .... As CTC says, resumes have to be written for the target audience and things critical to the hiring officer highlighted -- and here in DC that really means #1 an active security clearance.

- Last, I was impressed that so many resumes generally followed the CTC format of bullets and telegraphic statements, but was surprised at how many resumes bulleted text so dense you could call them paragraphs. Also, the titles on resumes were focused on the job applicant and not on the job for



"In the long run, you make your own luck — good, bad, or indifferent."

- Loretta Lynn, U.S. singer & songwriter



which s/he'd applied. "Senior Foreign Policy Officer" may be a good descriptor, but what the [employer] wanted to see was [title of the position advertised or, at least, a title pertinent to the position advertised].

"CTC's resume-writing workshop is right on the mark with all it has to say. But this survey of 40+ resumes suggests that too many students may not pay as much attention in class as they should!"

### CTC Footnote

This JSP Grad's comments reminded us of another complaint from employers that we have heard several times recently: Make very sure that you submit your application and credentials exactly as specified by the employer and exactly for that job. If you cannot follow instructions and take the time to tailor your resume for the position, the employer may pitch your application into the proverbial File 13.

This is especially true for online applications. You may have already wow-ed them with your corridor reputation and gotten your foot in the door with your exquisite networking skills. Even then, many employers will require you to fill out the online application.

Read the instructions **carefully!**



"Luck is a matter of preparation meeting opportunity."

- Oprah Winfrey,  
U.S. talk show host

### Resume Tune-up

The next contribution is from a JSP Graduate who is working part-time as a consultant.

"Your newsletter has a fine collection of tips and techniques to build a resume. Once I developed my resume during the job search program..., it helped me fit into the niche where I wanted to be: government consulting with an emphasis on communication and information technology.

"I recently gave my resume a tune-up. After a year of experience with the [employer], I knew what types of consulting work I favored and where I had the real qualifications to make a contribution. I also developed some new vocabulary -- the code words and lingo that I picked up from my new colleagues and competitors.

"My basic resume was still sound, but I decided that I could update and improve it with a few simple strokes.

- Scrutinizing my profile statement, I changed some key words to sharpen the focus on my new direction.
- I wrote a new entry on my experience with [the employer] to top the work summary.
- I cut back and rewrote some bits that didn't seem salient or credible in my new world. That kept the document trim.
- Finally, I inserted a couple of achievement bullets that failed to make the cut ...[when he retired] but -- in light of subsequent experience -- seemed more relevant.



"The exercise took relatively little time, because I had done so much work during the transition program. I shared the new resume with a few colleagues at [the employer], and used it to pursue a new freelance assignment that fit right in my sweet spot: technology and public diplomacy. The real benefit was to remind me of how my background fit this new emphasis. I'm now doing the type of work that I most enjoy at [the employer] and this new task, still keeping my paid activities well under 40 hours per week. ....

"In closing, Amy, to you and your colleagues: Thanks again for preparing me for the real Second Life. "



"No one has as much luck around the greens as one who practices a lot."

- *ChiChi Rodriguez, U.S. golfer*

## Survey Results

In our Biennial Survey in 2006, we received several bits of advice on resumes in response to the question, "Given your own experience with the Job Search Program and retirement, what advice would you offer to current JSP participants?" Here is a sample selection from six JSP Graduates:

"Pay a lot of attention to the resume. Tailor government experience to potential jobs. Network. Pass along information as well as seek it."

"Even if you don't plan to work after retirement, or you plan to work in an unrelated

field, take the exercises seriously, for you never know when you will be able to draw upon what you learn in the course. I have been especially grateful for learning the different kinds of resumes to write, highlighting different skills for different purposes."

"Learn how to package your experiences with the Government the best way you can to put your best foot forward with any employer. Variety of experiences and productive accomplishments are always looked upon favorably. Look into volunteer organizations -- they always need assistance and it always adds to or complements your resume."

"The resume is a living document and I quite often find one may not be sufficient. I have three, each with a different focus."

"I have found that a resume that impresses foreign service professionals may not be fully understood or appreciated by other government agencies, and certainly not by the private sector. Given that most of the current job opportunities seem to be found thru networking, cold pitches at job fairs, and online solicitations, resumes need to be far more plastic and targeted to key requirements listed in the solicitation/job description."

"Use JSP pointers -- especially networking (do it regularly) and the "elevator speech" (keep it current and relevant). Consider applying for new/different types of jobs outside the immediate realm of foreign affairs (the JSP listings are very helpful, here), and carefully translate your foreign service experiences in ways that illustrate their potential positive impact on the work in these new areas of employment."



## Special Request From Client

One of the responses to our appeal for advice in the February newsletter was another appeal for advice! Can any of you offer guidance on this question?

"Since starting the Job Search Program, I have had a few articles and a book chapter published. It's serious work to research and write publishable material, but getting my name in print has opened doors. I put a line about publications in my resume, but that didn't seem to stand out. I also created a list of publications and training (given and received) that could be used as my reference or as a supplement to a job application.

"Perhaps you or some of your grads have tips on how to handle experience at the drafting table, in the training room and other spots outside the workplace."



"If one is lucky, a solitary fantasy can totally transform one million realities."

- Maya Angelou,  
U.S. poet

## EDITOR'S NOTES

### Transferable Skills

We have received **NO** responses to our call for lists of skills transferable from the foreign affairs professions into Real Life professions. **IF** we ever receive any such lists, we will happily share them with you!

## Volunteer Travel: Earthwatch Institute

Longtime readers of this newsletter and the CTC job leads have certainly heard of the Earthwatch Institute. It is an international nonprofit organization that educates people concerned about the Earth's future and harnesses their energy to contribute to conserving our planet. Nearly 4,000 volunteers participate in Earthwatch projects every year -- collecting field data for various research projects. Earthwatch raises approximately \$15 million a year and uses it to communicate with scientists about proposed research projects, findings, and results; to provide opportunities for students and teachers to participate in expedition-based curricula and lesson plans; and to collaborate with global partner organizations on conservation plans and activities.

You can read more about the Earthwatch Institute online at [www.earthwatch.org](http://www.earthwatch.org). Their "expeditions" are not free and, frequently, offer very basic lodging (think tents and cabins without electricity), but they are to exotic locations where you can do some fascinating work that contributes to our knowledge of our world.

One of our clients participated in an Earthwatch trip 2005. Here are her comments on that experience:

"We just returned from the 10-day "Sugar Plantations of Hawaii" archeological expedition and can report that a fantastic time was had by all. The team leaders ("principal investigators", in the Earthwatch lingo) were excellent, both as archeologists and as tour guides/lecturers on Hawaii. Our accommodations, in the plantation manager's house, were very comfortable, far more so than we had ex-



pected — though probably somewhat exceptional for an Earthwatch experience, from what we heard.

“Thanks very much for letting us know of this opportunity. We recommend it highly and expect to join other Earthwatch projects in the future.”

I checked on their 2007 “expeditions” in my favorite areas of the world, Latin America and Africa, and found 18 intriguing possibilities. You can explore their website for more in ***your*** areas of interest. Here are Earthwatch’s brief descriptions of my favorites:

1. Argentina's Mysterious Cats - Help trap and track felines large and small in Argentina’s pampas grasslands
2. Brazil’s Dolphins - Get close to dolphins to help protect them and their beautiful estuary habitat
3. Cheetah - Help the world’s fastest mammal in a race against extinction in Namibia’s ranching heartland
4. Elephants of Tsavo - Monitoring the movements and behavior of elephants in a breathtaking Kenyan wildlife sanctuary
5. Grevy's Zebras at Lewa Conservancy - Follow endangered zebras in a wildlife conservancy to aid their survival
6. Lions of Tsavo - Help protect Tsavo’s legendary lions and find ways for lions and local communities to live side by side
7. Macaws of the Peruvian Amazon - Examine the effects of ecotourism and poaching on these brilliantly-colored endangered birds
8. South Africa's Brown Hyenas - Help

improve the odds for brown hyenas in wildlife-rich havens and unprotected lands

9. South African Penguins - Help protect biodiversity at a World Heritage Site hosting the world’s third-largest colony of African penguins
10. The Pantanal Field Center - Discover the most diverse assemblage of wildlife in the Americas while exploring the world’s largest freshwater wetland

“Beyond talent lie all the usual words: discipline, love, luck — but, most of all, endurance.”

- James Baldwin,  
U.S. novelist



### Volunteer Travel: Amizade

Another volunteer travel group we have advertised is Amizade. It is a nonprofit organization that “encourages intercultural exploration and understanding through community-driven volunteer programs and service-learning programs.”

You can learn more about Amizade and its programs on their website:  
[www.amizade.org](http://www.amizade.org).

Another client participated in an Amizade volunteer program in 2005. Here is her report:

“Summer before last I was looking for a getaway for my desk-bound FSO husband and our then 16-year-old son, who was an active Boy Scout and sort of “in training” for the ... High Adventure Boy Scout Camp for 10 days of backpacking



above 8,000 feet in the Rockies.

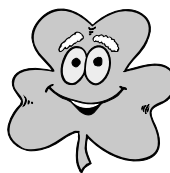
"Amizade offered several intriguing opportunities --some working at various projects on a Navajo reservation, some in Central and South America, and other sites within the U.S. Amizade does everything from teaching English to building schools or preserving historic and natural treasures. In our case, the idea of learning how to (re)build log structures at an historic dude ranch, as well as the trip length, cost and timing, and the natural setting in Gardiner, Montana, just outside of Yellowstone Park, made it the best fit for us.

"You basically pay for your airfare as well as the privilege of working while being put up in fairly primitive accommodations. (In our case, in a U.S. Forest Service fire-jumper tented camp.) In return, we got to help bring a 140-year-old log resort back to life, eat as much as we could stand at every meal, live in the fresh air, meet some great people and see an area of the country which is still mostly as God created it. My son had never planed a tree trunk or laid wooden tongue-in-groove flooring or erected whole log structures before, and came away the proud owner of some old-fashion construction skills.

"The staff was small but enthusiastic and very helpful. Our team leader cooked most of our meals, drove us back and forth from the work site every day, loaded us up with goodies to keep up our spirits and energy, and then, after working each day alongside us, frequently drove us around for hours in Yellowstone to see the sights. He even organized an old-timey guitar and fiddle performance for us at our remote worksite!

"Amizade seems to be one of those shoe-string operations which gets a lot of bang for its buck by using paying volunteers combined with a dedicated HQ and well-trained field staff. I think we might volunteer again with them, this time perhaps somewhere where my menfolk can try to polish up their Spanish!"

"Chance sometimes opens the door,  
but luck belongs  
to the good players."



- Bernard Baruch,  
U.S. businessman

In addition to the United States, they also work in Bolivia, Brazil, Poland, Germany, Jamaica, Mexico, and Tanzania. One of my favorite posts was Bolivia, so I investigated Amizade opportunities there and here is what I found:

#### Volunteer Program

Location: Cochabamba, Bolivia

Dates available:

- March 18 –31
- April 15 –28
- August 5 –18
- September 30 – October 13
- November 4 –17

Cost: \$1,450

Purpose: Building A High School for a Quechua Community

#### Volunteer Placement Opportunity

Location: Cochabamba, Bolivia

Dates: 2 weeks – 6 months; Starting 1st and 3rd Saturday of each month

Cost: \$1,270 1st 2 weeks; \$255 each additional week

Purpose: Assist in youth and elderly cen-



ters, orphanages and health clinics

Check Amizade's website to read more about these trips and investigate others.

If you participate on any volunteer trips, please send us a recommendation!

"Maybe I'm lucky to be  
going so slowly, because  
I may be going  
in the wrong direction!"



- Ashleigh Brilliant, English writer

## JOB LEADS

The next CTC Job Fair will be held on Tuesday, March 27th, from 1:00 to 4:00 pm in the gymnasium of Building D (aka Field House) at FSI in Arlington, Virginia. Be sure to bring a photo ID — and, if you have one, your Retiree ID. A few employers will leave early, so be sure to arrive before 3:00 pm.

We are already booked solid with employers and have a waiting list! The employers are:

1. Abt Associates, Inc. - [www.abtassoc.com](http://www.abtassoc.com)
2. Academy for Educational Development – AED - [www.aed.org](http://www.aed.org)
3. ActioNet, Inc. - [www.actionet.com](http://www.actionet.com)
4. Allied Technology Group, Inc. - ATG - [www.alliedtech.com](http://www.alliedtech.com) <<http://www.alliedtech.com/>>
5. AMIDEAST - [www.amideast.org](http://www.amideast.org)
6. ARD, Inc. - [www.ardinc.com](http://www.ardinc.com)
7. Beacon Associates, Inc. - [www.beaconassociates.net](http://www.beaconassociates.net)
8. Bechtel National, Inc. - [www.bechtel.com](http://www.bechtel.com)
9. Carana Corporation - [www.carana.com](http://www.carana.com)
10. Computer Sciences Corporation – CSC - [www.csc.com](http://www.csc.com)
11. Creative Associates International, Inc. - [www.caii.com](http://www.caii.com)
12. Crown Agents Consultancy, Inc. - [www.crownagents.com](http://www.crownagents.com)
13. Development Alternatives, Inc. – DAI - [www.dai.com](http://www.dai.com)
14. Diversity Services, Inc. - [www.diversitydc.com](http://www.diversitydc.com)
15. Emerging Markets Group – EMG - [www.emergingmarketsgroup.com](http://www.emergingmarketsgroup.com)
16. Emerging Technologies Group, USA - [www.etginc.com](http://www.etginc.com)
17. GlobalCorps (for OFDA) - [www.globalcorps.com](http://www.globalcorps.com)
18. Harlan Lee & Associates - [www.hlassociates.com](http://www.hlassociates.com)
19. International Relief & Development – IRD - [www.ird-dc.org](http://www.ird-dc.org)
20. International Resources Group – IRG - [www.irgltd.com](http://www.irgltd.com)
21. John Snow, Inc. – JSI - [www.jsi.com](http://www.jsi.com)
22. KellyFedSecure - [www.kellyfedsecure.com](http://www.kellyfedsecure.com)
23. Louis Berger Group, Inc. - [www.louisberger.com](http://www.louisberger.com)
24. Lucent Technologies - [www.lucent.com](http://www.lucent.com)
25. Management Systems International – MSI - [www.msiworldwide.com](http://www.msiworldwide.com)



26. Northern Virginia Community College  
– NVCC - [www.nvcc.edu/hr/employment.htm](http://www.nvcc.edu/hr/employment.htm)
27. Pact - [www.pactworld.org](http://www.pactworld.org)
28. PAE Government Services, Inc. -  
[www.pae-react.com](http://www.pae-react.com)
29. Professional Solutions, LLC -  
[www.prosol1.com](http://www.prosol1.com)
30. PRO-telligent LLC - [www.PRO-telligent.com](http://www.PRO-telligent.com)
31. Science Applications International  
Corporation – SAIC - [www.saic.com](http://www.saic.com)
32. Senior Employment Resources – SER  
- [www.seniorjobs.org](http://www.seniorjobs.org)
33. The Services Group, Inc. - TSG -  
[www.tsginc.com](http://www.tsginc.com)
34. The Shaw Group - [www.shawgrp.com](http://www.shawgrp.com)
35. Software Technology Group – STG -  
[www.stginc.com](http://www.stginc.com)
36. Tessada & Associates, Inc. -  
[www.tessada.com](http://www.tessada.com)
37. U.S. Investigative Services - USIS -  
[www.usis.com](http://www.usis.com)
38. U.S. Peace Corps -  
[www.peacecorps.gov](http://www.peacecorps.gov)
39. United Nations Employment & Assis-  
tance Unit - IO/S/EA - [www.state.gov/p/empl/](http://www.state.gov/p/empl/)
40. Worldwide Information Network Sys-  
tems, Inc. – WINS -  
[www.winsnetworks.com](http://www.winsnetworks.com)

“May your pockets  
be heavy  
and your heart be light.  
May good luck pursue you  
each morning and night.”



- Irish blessing

## ATTENTION, JSP GRADS!

### Hard Copy Subscriptions

Effective April 1, 2007, the CTC Newslet-  
ter will be delivered to all subscribers via  
e-mail only. **Delivery by snail mail will  
no longer be an option.**

Please note that the newsletter will still be  
available on our internet web page —  
[www.state.gov/m/fsi/tc](http://www.state.gov/m/fsi/tc) and hard copies  
will be available in our offices at FSI.

If you want to receive the newsletter via  
e-mail, please send your e-mail address  
to us at [pittsa@state.gov](mailto:pittsa@state.gov) before April 1st.

Be sure to indicate in your message  
whether you would like job leads included  
in your subscription. Keep in mind that  
we publish approximately 3,000 job leads  
via e-mail each Calendar Year. Many cli-  
ents create an e-mail account just for the  
CTC job leads and newsletters.

Thank you for your cooperation!



### New ADST Websites

The Association for Diplomatic Studies  
and Training recently announced the  
creation of two new websites:

#### Frontline Diplomacy

Features more than 1300 interviews with  
career and non-career U.S. diplomats  
dating from 1922 to the late 1990s. Now  
it is available on the Library of Congress  
website at <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/diplomacy/about.html>



### U.S. Diplomacy

This is ADST's new "instructional" website which reports exciting tales of U.S. diplomatic history. You can even find information on your more contemporary colleagues such as Roz Ridgway, Terence Todman, Thomas Pickering, and Prudence Bushnell. It can be found at [www.usdiplomacy.org](http://www.usdiplomacy.org). The Una Chapman Cox Foundation funded the creation of this website which targets the general public, students, and researchers.

### New ADST Projects

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training is now conducting interviews with foreign affairs employees who were and are involved in recent events in Sudan and in the evacuation of American citizens from Lebanon in summer of 2006. If you can contribute, please contact ADST at [admin@adst.org](mailto:admin@adst.org) or [executivedirector@adst.org](mailto:executivedirector@adst.org).



**"These things,  
I warmly wish for you —  
someone to love,  
some work to do,  
a bit o' sun,  
a bit o' cheer,  
and  
a guardian angel  
always near."**

*- Irish blessing*



## **CTC NEWSLETTER**

**FSI/TC/CTC**

**U.S. Department of State  
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at [www.state.gov/m/fsi/tc](http://www.state.gov/m/fsi/tc)